

## REMARKS

Claims 1-17 and 26-31 remain in the application for prosecution. Claims 18-25 have been cancelled. Submitted herewith is a clean set of pending claims. The Applicant confirms that the inventorship for the remaining claims has not changed.

With Group I, the Applicant provisionally elects the invention of Group III, which includes claims 1-8, 17 and 26-31. The Applicant makes this election, however, with traverse. It is the Applicant's belief that the claims of Group III should be grouped with the claims of Group IV (claims 9-16) as the two are directed to closely related subject matter. As noted in MPEP § 806.05, related inventions "may be" subject to a restriction requirement, and the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to combine the claims of Group III and Group IV.

Claims 1 and 9 contain nearly identical subject matter. Both require a slab with a nonionic layer and an ionic layer. Both have a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape. To the extent the Examiner believes that limitation of claim 9 regarding "pumping said bottom surface of said laser slab" creates the problem necessitating this restriction as suggested on page 3, then the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an Examiner's Amendment removing the words "said bottom surface of" in claim 9. If this amendment to claim 9 is performed, then sub-item (2) under MPEP 806.05(f) will not be met.

In short, the claims in the Groups III and IV are so closely related that the burden on the Examiner of combining these two groups is minimal, compared to the burden on the Applicant for paying for and maintaining two patents on subject matter that is so closely related. The Applicant recognizes that the Examiner is given deference in these situations when rendering a restriction requirement. The Applicant has cancelled the claims in Group II (claims 18-25) and

these claims may be pursued in a continuing application. The Applicant, however, respectfully requests that the Examiner combine Groups III and IV.

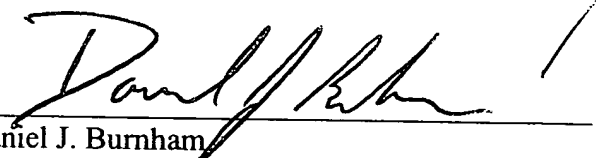
### **Conclusion**

The Applicant believes the claims are allowable over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance.

If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,

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